

HOUSE BILL 604

By Pitts

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4; Title 8; Title 13; Title 33; Title 34; Title 49; Title 55; Title 56; Title 67; Title 68 and Title 71, relative to services for aged persons.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. There is hereby created a special joint committee to study the creation of a department of aging and adult services. The committee shall be known as the Committee to Study a New Department of Aging and Adult Services; herein referred to as "the committee." The committee shall build upon the work of the committee created pursuant to Public Chapter 586 of the Acts of 2009.

SECTION 2.

(a) The committee shall particularly address issues relating to reducing systemic fragmentation of services to aged persons, the lack of a single point of entry for aged persons seeking services, and enhancing system-wide planning for services to aged persons.

(b) The committee shall also study issues relating to the creation of a new department of aging and adult services and shall assess the following:

(1) All programs currently housed within the various agencies and commissions of state government along with staffing patterns and budgetary information;

(2) The physical location of all such entities controlled by state government that are currently responsible for providing services and programs for the aging population;

(3) Entities that need to move from an existing department to a newly created department along with what programs and functions need to be transferred;

(4) Staff responsibilities, budgetary needs, and existing contractual obligations that may be affected;

(5) The flow of public funding for the aging population;

(6) Structures that are used by other states in dealing with services and programs for the aging;

(7) Federal and state laws that have an impact on how the agency would be structured;

(8) Current deficiencies in programs that need to be addressed through the structure of a new department;

(9) The establishment of better accountability standards so that goals and performance can be accurately measured;

(10) Best practices in terms of monitoring the department's ability to properly perform its required roles; and

(11) The benefits that could be derived from having a cabinet-level position to serve as an advocate to the governor on behalf of aging or vulnerable adults.

SECTION 3. The committee shall consist of three (3) members of the house of representatives and three (3) members of the senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers. The commissioners of human services, health, and finance and administration will serve as ex officio voting members of the committee.

SECTION 4. All appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the committee upon request of the chair.

SECTION 5. All members of the committee shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the general assembly.

SECTION 6. The committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the general assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

SECTION 7. The committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the One Hundred Seventh General Assembly no later than February 1, 2012, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.

SECTION 8. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.